

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSM-03 SES-02 SAA-01
CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-13 HA-05 ACDA-12
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 CPR-02 MCT-02
OES-09 EB-08 /118 W
-----125498 281404Z /44

O P 281114Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9418
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 4990

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION, AUGUST 28, 1978, 1400 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 4965 (DTG 251238Z AUG 78)

1. SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS LEFT AUGUST 28 FOR
LATAKIA IN THE WAKE OF FURTHER FIGHTING IN THE BATROUN AREA
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OF NORTH LEBANON. IN POSSIBLE RETALIATION FOR SYRIAN
SHELLING IN THE BATROUN AREA, CHRISTIAN MILITIA FROM THE
MARJAYUN AREA SHELLED FOUR VILLAGES IN THE WESTERN BEKAA.
THE EAST BEIRUT CEASE-FIRE IS STILL GENERALLY HOLDING,
ALTHOUGH SMALL ARMS FIRE BROKE OUT IN THE CHRISTIAN SUBURG
OF AYN AR-RUMMANEH. THE FRENCH EMBASSY DENIED A REPORT
THAT FRENCH NATIONALS HAVE BEEN ADVISED TO LEAVE LEBANON.

BACHIR GEMAYEL RETURNED FROM PARIS. THE LEBANESE PRESS REPORTED THAT AMBASSADOR PARKER WAS BEING TRANSFERRED TO MOROCCO. END SUMMARY.

2. BOUTROS TO LATAKIA.

FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS LEFT AUGUST 28 FOR LATAKIA TO MEET WITH SYRIAN PRESIDENT HAFIZ AL ASSAD AND SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ABDEL HALIM KHADDAM.

3. MORE FIGHTING IN BATROUN AREA.

A. THERE HAS BEEN MORE FIGHTING IN THE BATROUN/KOURA AREA OF NORTH LEBANON. AS BEST WE CAN PIECE TOGETHER:

-- THE MORNING OF AUGUST 26 CHRISTIAN GUNMEN (PROBABLY PHALANGISTS) FIRED ON SYRIAN ADF PATROL AS IT TRIED TO ENTER THE VILLAGE OF KUR. ACCORDING TO AN ADF COMMUNIQUE, ONE SYRIAN WAS KILLED AND FOUR WOUNDED, AS WELL AS ONE GUNMAN KILLED, FOUR GUNMEN WOUNDED, AND 15 PEOPLE ARRESTED. THE SYRIANS THEN BROUGHT ARTILLERY INTO PLAY IN THE REGION AND OCCUPIED KUR, ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT-LE JOUR. PHALANGE SOURCES CLAIMED 65 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND 40 MISSING AS A RESULT OF THE SHELLING, ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS.

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-- THE AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 26 SYRIAN FORCES OCCUPIED THE VILLAGES OF BIJDARFIL, IBRIN AND DIRYA.

-- THE EVENING OF AUGUST 27 THE SYRIANS EXCHANGED FIRE WITH CHRISTIAN FIGHTERS (AGAIN PROBABLY PHALANGE) IN THE VILLAGES OF KFIFAN, ABDILLI AND DIRYA. THE SYRIANS USED ARTILLERY, L'ORIENT-LE JOUR SAID, AND ABOUT 800 CIVILIANS REPORTEDLY FLED THEIR HOMES FOR THE NEARBY TOWN OF MAYFUQ.

B. COMMENT: WE DO NOT THINK THAT EITHER SENIOR SYRIAN OR SENIOR PHALANGE OFFICERS IN BEIRUT PURPOSELY SOUGHT AN EXTENSION OF HOSTILITIES INTO THE BATROUN AREA. INSTEAD, AS A RESULT OF THE AUGUST 24 AMBUSH BY SUPPORTERS OF SULAYMAN FRANJIYAH WHICH KILLED EIGHT OR NINE PEOPLE IN BATROUN AREA, BOTH SYRIANS AND PHALANGE HAVE BEEN DRAGGED INTO A SITUATION THEY WOULD PROBABLY HAVE PREFERRED TO AVOID. END COMMENT.

4. SOUTH LEBANON.

A. IN POSSIBLE RETALIATION FOR THE SYRIAN SHELLING IN NORTH LEBANON, CHRISTIAN MILITIAS THE EVENING OF AUGUST

27-28 SHELLED FOR THE FIRST TIME FOUR VILLAGES IN THE WESTERN BEKAA--MAYDUN, AS SURAYRI, DELLATI, AND QILYA, ABOUT TEN KILOMETERS NORTH OF MARJAYUN, ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT-LE JOUR. SEVEN PEOPLE WERE REPORTEDLY KILLED.

B. THE MILITIAS ALSO SHELLED THE LEBANESE ARMY DETACHMENT AT KAWKABA FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE AUGUST 7, THE PAPER SAID. THERE WERE APPARENTLY NO CASUALTIES. THE PAPER ALSO REPORTED 110 LEBANESE SOLDIERS ARE NOW AT KAWKABA.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 4990

5. SITUATION IN BEIRUT.

A. THE EAST BEIRUT CEASE-FIRE IS STILL GENERALLY HOLDING. SMALL-ARMS FIRE BROKE OUT THE AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 27 IN THE CHRISTIAN SUBURB OF AYN AR-RUMMANEH, BUT STOPPED BY

EARLY EVENING. ONE CIVILIAN WAS WOUNDED, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS.

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B. IN WEST BEIRUT THERE WERE TWO EXPLOSIONS THE EVENING OF AUGUST 26 IN THE HAMRA AREA--ONE DAMAGED THE CAR OF A LEBANESE POLICEMAN AND THE OTHER A SUPERMARKET. WE ASSUME THESE EXPLOSIONS WERE A POLITICAL, CAUSED BY PEOPLE RUNNING PROTECTION RACKETS OR BY VARIOUS GANGS RETALIATING FOR INTRUSION ON THEIR TURF.

B. BEIRUT PORT IS STILL OPEN.

6. FRENCH EMBASSY DENIAL.

THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN BEIRUT ON AUGUST 27 CATEGORICALLY DENIED A REPORT BY THE AS SAHIFIYA NEWS AGENCY THAT FRENCH NATITNALS IN LEBANON HAD BEEN ADVISED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. (IN FACT, OUR DCM WAS TOLD BY FRENCH DCM THAT AFTER FIGHTING STARTED IN JULY, FRENCH EMBASSY DISCREETLY RECOMMENDED TO MEMBERS OF THE FRENCH COMMUNITY THAT THEY PLAN TO HAVE THEIR FAMILIES SPEND THE SUMMER IN FRANCE).

7. BACHIR GEMAYEL RETURNS.

BACHIR GEMAYEL RETURNED AUGUST 27 FROM PARIS. HE HAD GONE TO THE FRENCH CAPITAL ON AUGUST 25 OSTENSIBLY TO ATTEND A MARRIAGE, BUT MANY LEBANESE SUSPECT HE MET ISRAELIS THERE.

8. PRESS SAYS PARKER TRANSFERRED.

L'ORIENT-LE JOUR SAID ON AUGUST 27 AND 28 THAT AMBASSADOR PARKER WAS BEING TRANSFERRED TO MOROCCO. (SEPTTEL) KINSOLVING

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